Expert Advice: Start Your Own Jewelry Business

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Step by Step Wire Jewelry

weave **extraordinary** bead caps

super simple and sexy **hoop earrings**

Make a **wardrobe** of rings

technicolor **chain maille**

Norma Djurado

SUMMER 2007
VOL. 3, NO. 3

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OFF THE WIRE

Wireless? I don't think so.

On a flight home from Florida recently, I sat next to a very interesting man. He was a pastor, an American who'd been living and working in France for the last 20 years. He was, by nature and profession, an inquisitive man. He asked me what I did for a living and I pulled out a copy of this magazine. We spent the rest of the trip talking about jewelry, and artisans, and how he knew a jewelry artist who was moving from America to his town.

He pointed out words in the magazine that were French, like "maille," and, in fact, my first name. And that the word for wire in French was either "fil" or "câble."

And then he said something that made me laugh. He said, "You must cringe when people talk about 'wireless.'"

I had never given it a thought! Wireless? Not quite. Sure, I can wander from room to room with my wireless laptop, but the modem is still securely wired to something. And though I'm not talking through tin cans and string, the cell phone towers along the Interstates have more cables than you've ever seen in one place.

Let's face it, wire still connects us to the world. Similarly, the love of making wire into beautiful pieces of jewelry connects wire artists. Wire forums on the Internet connect us to one another, despite miles and oceans. Iza Malcyzk, our cover artist, lives and works in Poland. We form friendships all over the world through our passion for our art. And I like to think we're doing our small part by showcasing the works of our readers and sharing designs and techniques with wire jewelry artists everywhere.

I made a new friend on the plane that day. And I sent him off with a copy of the magazine to give to *his* friend who makes jewelry. I asked him to encourage her to write to me.

Let me know where you're reading *Step by Step Wire Jewelry*. I'd love to hear just how far reaching our contribution is.

Denise Peck, *Editor-in-Chief*
dpeck@interweave.com

DID YOU KNOW?

All hammers except a chasing hammer will mar your steel bench block.

Reserve one side of your block for use with your chasing hammer and the other side for all other decorative hammer heads. Otherwise, the marred block will texture the other side of the wire as you're hammering the top side.

Step by Step Wire Jewelry

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Subscriptions Order Line/Customer Service: (866) 836-7865, stepbystepwirejewelry@palmcoastd.com. Callers outside of the U.S. call (386) 246-3343.

Manuscripts and photographs are invited. For writers' guidelines, call (610) 232-5739 or e-mail sgraham@interweave.com, subject line "Wire Writers' Guidelines."

Step By Step Wire Jewelry (ISSN: 1555-9939; USPS: 023-541) is published Spring, Summer Preview, Summer, Fall and Winter by Interweave Press, LLC, 201 E. Fourth St., Loveland, CO 80537-5655. Periodicals postage paid at Loveland, CO 80538, and additional mailing offices. **Postmaster send address changes to Step By Step Wire Jewelry, Subscription Services, PO Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235.** Canadian Sales Agreement No. 40029050. Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to AIM 7289 Torbram Rd. Mississauga, ON L4T 1G8.

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ASPIRE MEDIA

sylvie

WIRE-WISE Q & A

Connie Fox
has been making jewelry for over 10 years. She teaches classes in her San Diego studio, and at major jewelry and bead events including Jewelry Arts Expo and Bead Fest. She is also a frequent contributor to *Lapidary Journal* and *Step by Step Beads*. Visit her store at www.conniefox.com.

Q: For the last eight years I have been spending long days at a job staring at a computer monitor and I am sick of it. While I am decently paid, I feel overworked, unfulfilled, and unappreciated. Making wire jewelry is my passion and I want to convert this hobby into a full-time business. Do you have any advice on how to make this transition?

Jeanette, from Northern California

A: Jeanette, the manner in which you make the transition depends on both your personality and your bank account. If you love to take risks and you have a bountiful bank account that can support you for at least several years, then why spend one more day at a dreadful job? I am guessing though that this isn't the case or you would have made the switch without asking my advice. Thus, my recommendations will reflect both a cautious approach and a need to earn a living.

Making a transition into a new line of work takes a lot of effort. You certainly don't want to destroy your health or peace of mind as you continue to work at your job while laying the foundation for your new business. Make it a priority to gradually de-invest in your job without getting fired. For example, turn down overtime, refuse advancement opportunities, and use your breaks and lunch hour to learn skills for your new business. As your jewelry business grows and your income along with it, aim to reduce your hours at work through job-sharing or perhaps even taking a different position.

While de-investing in your job, be ruthless about creating time for your new venture. What activities and commitments can you drop? What super-woman expectations can you let go of? How can you get others to take on some of your responsibilities? Practice saying "no" to friends and family and let them know why you are less available. With a keen eye, look for ways you waste time. Instead of reading the paper or watching some meaningless TV program, read about how to become an effective salesperson. Use your travel time to listen to business-related tapes. Use every little space of time to become the entrepreneur you want to be.

Are you still with me? You may already have objections popping up in your mind. Moving into the world of self-employment and committing yourself to work that you love requires an inner change. You must learn to think and behave differently, and it is this inner development that is the biggest challenge you will face. Start thinking of yourself as a successful businesswoman even though you have not yet arrived at this destination. Learn to stand up to discouragement and negative thinking, especially when the thoughts are self-generated. Be diligent about converting inner objections into new positive perspectives that will lead you toward your goals.

Not only is it important to change your thinking, you must take action. Do something every day to move in the direction you want to go. Resist the temptation to stay in your familiar, yet unfulfilling "comfort zone." Chances are if you are not taking at least some constructive action you have slipped back into the comfort zone. I heartily recommend seeking out friends or women's professional groups who will support you in your efforts.

Taking action requires you to know what kind of action to take. This sounds so obvious, right? Without a clear destination in mind many of your efforts may be wasted. Because there are many different ways to develop a jewelry business, you need to define what you want to do. And defining your business doesn't mean the plan is cast in stone. Think of it as an evolutionary process that will be nuanced over time.

How do you determine what type of business you want? Research is the answer. Do an Internet search and list all the different types of jewelry businesses you can find. Wholesaling one-of-a-kind pieces to galleries and retailing at art shows are two options. This type of external research will acquaint you with possibilities, and some perhaps that you hadn't considered previously. Another type of research is internally driven. Your intuition and sense of inner knowingness is a great resource and will help you make decisions. Learn to include this inner perspective on your journey to establish your business.

Jeanette, you may have thought I would focus on more concrete topics such as marketing, financial issues, or sales strategies in my response to your request for advice. As a matter of fact, I will talk more about these areas in the next issue. I deliberately chose the above topics because they represent the stumbling blocks that most easily trip people. I wish you well in your adventure and will continue my response in the next issue.

If you have a question on wirework that is itching to be answered, or a tip you'd like to share with others, please let us know. We can't respond to each question individually but will select a few to answer in this column. Send your questions and tips to: cfox@san.rr.com, Subject: Wire-Wise; or Connie Fox, 2247 San Diego Ave., Suite 237, San Diego, CA 92110. And, please, let us know where you're writing from!

sylvie

Lookin' Good

An artist's guide to your "About Me" picture.

If you're like most people with a Web site, you know there are lots of pitfalls — big gaping holes and little curbs we all trip over from time to time. We can use all the help we can get finding the latest tools and ideas to help market our site. Sometimes it's the little things that can make a big difference.

Regardless of media or specialty, we spend a great deal of time deciding how to create and position our artwork. Many hours are dedicated to the materials we use in our pieces and, of course, the most creative ways to photograph the pieces to look their best on our Web sites. We realize that the way our product is photographed says a great deal about what kind of art it is. Is it casual or high end? Is it a necklace to wear to a gala opening, or a piece to slap on with jeans and a tank top? Are we selling jewelry you'll find in a gallery, or stuff you'll be selling at the country fair?

There's no denying it. Pictures definitely tell a story. So why do people typically slack off on their own picture?

I have seen Web sites with some of the most elegantly photographed pictures of jewelry — with an "about me" picture of the artist that looks like she just got out of a wind tunnel. Maybe it's me, but a Don King hairstyle and Gomer Pyle overalls just don't scream, "Spend your jewelry dollars here!"

The problem is that many of us spend so much time getting the look and feel of our jewelry pictures right, that our personal pages become an afterthought. That's a pretty big mistake to make — especially since our personal picture says a lot about not only the person we are, but about the mood and emotion we are trying to create with our artwork. It is a portrait of you, the artist.

Common Mistakes

If you are selling from your Web site, or even just using it as a sort of online catalog of your work, you need to consider your portrait to be a part of your overall sales package. So what do we want to say about this artist?

For starters, unless you're married to — or travel buddies with — a professional photographer, let's put those vacation shots of you standing in front of Big Ben back into the scrapbook where they belong. No pictures of you standing on the Great Wall of China or the shores of Loch Ness with your hands checking out the lint in your pockets.

And none of those group shots of you and your extended family members — I mean, it's great that you're a close-knit family, but unless Uncle Bob is running the lathe and your niece works the Foredom, they shouldn't be sharing the spotlight with you.

That's right, let's say it together. "It's all about me."

So Where to Begin?

To put the whole "package" together, let's start by looking at exactly what you're selling. What kind of message does your company present? Do you make romantic jewelry for brides? Perhaps you'll want your personal portrait to show your softer side with a blurred edge glamour shot, custom painted in pastel hues. Does your work have more of an exotic edge to it? Then you might go for something a little darker — maybe a little hair over the eye, come-hither look, and trot out that leopard print silk shirt in the back of your closet. Do you make casual beach-style stuff, of the tumbled glass and seashell variety? I'm seeing you in a Hawaiian shirt with a pair of Ray-Bans on.

Look! I Can Use Tools!

Another good choice for the hardworking artist is a good shot of you practicing your craft. If you specialize in lampworking, get a shot of yourself working at the torch. Polymer clay artist? How about one of you pulling a cane or feeding a sheet of clay into the pasta machine? Wire artists could be brandishing pliers. It's all about the tools, baby — and from the forum posts I've been privy to, most of you run like a bunny and hide the Visa statement

sylvie

Karen Hardy
is a California-based artist, instructor and writer who has been making and selling her jewelry and artwork for over 15 years. She is the president of the Beach Cities Polymer Clay Guild and can also be seen on the DIY Channel's "Jewelry Making" and the upcoming "Craft Lab." Despite the tremendous amount of time she devotes to her artwork, she is a flawless wife, parent, and all-around human being. She can be reached at hardymama@adelphia.net

before your spouse sees what you've spent on texture sheets, glass, tools and wire. If you've got it, flaunt it!

The idea here is to give a sense of "technique" to the outsider viewing your site. It's a teaser as to what goes on in your studio — a glimpse of where the item they are purchasing originated.

And again, always, the emphasis is on a well-framed shot. You may have to spend a whole day, and have hundreds of pictures taken of you (we love those digital cameras, don't we?) before settling on the one you feel best shows you "at work."

Don't be afraid of doing some creative cropping. A well-cropped photo shows you hard at work making beads at the torch. A poorly cropped photo shows you sitting on your butt, hard at work making beads at the torch. The first says "I make beautiful things with fire," and the latter says "maybe I should cut down on the lampworking and hit the gym more often." And maybe change out of those flannel pajama bottoms, too. Which message do you want to send to your potential customers?

Your portrait says something about your artwork. It should not only convey the style of art you are selling, but should also portray you as a professional, someone who takes as much care displaying themselves as they do their craft. With a little time and effort, your personal portrait can be something that enhances your Web site and gives your customers a better understanding of you — the artist behind the creations.

wire woven bead cap

Wire weaving on a very small scale.

SKILL LEVEL ๑๑๑๑๑

BY IZA MALCZYK

Searching for my own style in jewelry design, I was inspired by many great artists. Lynne Merchant was one of them — I was enjoying her wire wrapped beads and heavy-oxidized look for a long time, and thought of incorporating one of her techniques into making a woven bead cap. Several hours of coiling, and my first cap was ready. Since then, I've used it in many shapes and styles in my necklaces and earrings. They are a perfect touch for gemstones and finish a bead in a unique and intricate way.

TOOLS & SUPPLIES

- 18-gauge sterling half hard wire, 4"
- 20-gauge sterling dead soft wire, 1'
- 30-gauge sterling dead soft wire, 5'
- 1 pear-shaped bead sized 0.9" long x 0.5"-0.2" wide, drilled with a hole large enough for 18-gauge wire, may also be oval or nugget-shaped.
- Round nose pliers
- Chain nose pliers
- Flat nose pliers
- Wire cutters
- Liver-of-sulfur

sylvie

Cut a 2" piece of 18-gauge wire with your wire cutters. Using your round nose pliers, create a loop on one of the ends of the wire.

1

Wrap 3 coils of the 20-gauge wire onto the 18-gauge wire, leaving the short end of the 20-gauge wire close to the loop.

2

Put the bead on the 18-gauge wire with its thinner part toward the loop and the coils. Do not trim the short end of the 20-gauge wire.

3

Bend the wire at the bottom of the bead, so that it sits snugly between the coils and the bend.

4

Using your chain nose pliers, hold the loop and the shorter end of the 20-gauge wire in your non-dominant hand.

5

With your dominant hand, hold the longer length of 20-gauge wire and coil a spiral down the bead in the same direction that you've coiled the three initial coils.

6

sylvie

wire woven bead cap

7 Make the spiral tight, each coil close to the previous one.

8 When you reach the size of the bead cap you desire, cut the wire, leaving around 1.6" for the swirl.

9 Create a loop at the end of the 20-gauge wire with your round nose pliers.

10 Using your flat nose pliers, create a spiral around the loop. Leave 0.6" of straight wire between the spiral and the bead cap.

11 Using your fingers, gently push the spiral against the bead.

12 Trim the short end of the 20-gauge wire closely next to the loop. Crimp down the remaining small tail of the wire with your chain nose pliers.

sylvie

Straighten the bend of the 18-gauge wire at the bottom of the bead. Gently remove the bead and the cap from the 18-gauge wire.

13

Use your fingernails to gently separate the coils slightly, so that it will be easier to weave the 30-gauge wire through them.

14

Cut a 20" piece of the 30-gauge wire. Starting at the top of the spiral, push about 3" of the 30-gauge wire through one of the top spaces, so that it stays inside of the bead cap — do not trim it yet. Bring the long end of the 30-gauge wire down two coils on the outside of the cap, and then wrap it fully around the second coil. If you are right-handed the wire should go down on the right side of the row, if you are left-handed then it should go left.

15

Again, wrap down to the next coil, over the outside of two and around one.

16

Repeat the backstitch until you reach the last/bottom coil of the spiral.

17

Wrap the last coil 10 times with the 30-gauge wire.

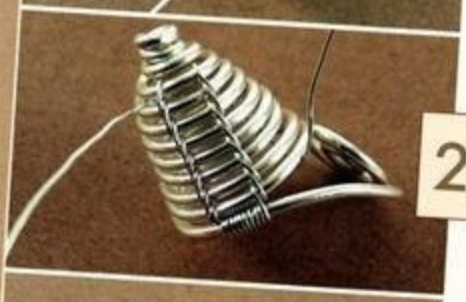
18

sylvie

wire woven bead cap

19 Coiling back up the spiral, make a single wrap around the coil next to the bottom one. Coiling up, go on the left side of the row with your wire if you are right-handed, and on the right side if you are left-handed.

20 Wrap back up and around each coil. Go over the outside of two and around one.



21 Repeat the backstitch until you reach the top of the spiral.

22 Wrap the wire once around the top coil of the spiral.

23 Going down the spiral wrap the following, single coil — again go on the right side of the row if you are right-handed, and on the left side if you are left-handed.

24 Go down the spiral to stitch it. As you reach the bottom coil of the spiral, wrap it 10 times with the 30-gauge wire. (See Step 18.)

sylvie

Trim the end of the wire that was left inside of the bead cap, at the beginning of stitching the spiral. Wrap the wire once around the top spiral and trim it on the inside of the cap.

25

Once in a while you will have to add a new wire. The 30-gauge wire becomes brittle while working in back-stitch. It is advisable to finish the wire every three full cycles of going down and up the spiral. Leave the end of the old wire and start with a new one, as in Step 15. Make one full down-and-up cycle, and only trim the end of the old wire.

26

Go another full cycle to trim the end of the new wire — you are left with only one wire.

27

While stitching the spiral, you will come to a point where leaving one coil will be necessary. The coils become too tight at the top to wrap them. When you reach this point, simply leave the top coil and turn down in your stitching on the next coil.

28

When you come to the point where the bottom coil and the swirl meet, wrap the coil twice, then the coil together with the swirl six times, and again the coil twice. Again, go up stitching.

29

When you reach the bottom coil for the last time, wrap it 10 times with the 30-gauge wire, and go up following the directions from Step 20. The closer to the end, the more difficult the wrapping is — the coils are almost fixed in their positions and stitching with the 30-gauge wire, though it's very thin, may become more challenging.

30

31

Go up the spiral to create the last row, next to the first row you stitched in Step 15. Wrap the wire once around the top coil, and trim it close.

You've made your first bead cap! You can make variations of this cap by attaching seed beads to the bottom coil while wrapping it 10 times, or use it as an end cap for a bunch of chains.

32

To insert the bead into the cap, push a piece of 18-gauge wire finished with a loop into the bead cap, and string the bead on the wire.

You may choose to include the bead cap in a piece of a larger work, such as a necklace or a bracelet — simply finish the wire at the bottom with a loop.

You may also choose to make some dangle earrings with the bead caps — hang the bead on a headpin, thread on the bead cap, and finish the whole piece with either a simple or a wrapped loop. Use liver-of-sulfur to make the stitches stand out nicely.

Iza Malczyk

Raised in the Polish countryside, Iza believes that making jewelry brings her back to the happiness of her childhood, the roots of nature, and the depths of the soul, with each move transforming a bunch of beads and a ball of wire into beauty. When she's not making jewelry, she likes to travel and spend time with her husband, son Kuba, and her cats. To see more of her work or to contact her, go to www.izamalczyk.com.

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Rose pin, leaf pins, and sakura pin, woven and hammered to harden.

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rainbow wristbands

Chain maille bracelets made with rubber and aluminum jump rings.

SKILL LEVEL ❂❂❂

BY SUSAN C. THOMAS

My interest in chain maille began with a simple 3-in-3 bracelet in sterling silver. I knew my middle school students would love to make chain maille, so I began to search for a less expensive material. When I found The Ring Lord (theringlord.com), I noticed they offered a variety of colored anodized aluminum jump rings and colored rubber rings. I wasn't sure what I'd do with the rubber rings but ordered every variety and began experimenting. By alternating metal and rubber rings you can create a bracelet that doesn't require a clasp. Perfect!

The 4-in-1 bracelet here was the logical result of those experimentations. A wide band offers a large palette in which to create a design.

TOOLS & SUPPLIES

- 2 pairs flat nose pliers

For a 6½" wrist:

- Aluminum jump rings: 72 orange, ¼", 16-gauge; 56 turquoise, ¼", 16-gauge; 56 dark pink, ¼", 14-gauge
- Rubber rings: 72 yellow, ¼" (10mm), 16-gauge; 56 turquoise, ¼" (10mm), 16-gauge

For a 9½" wrist:

- Aluminum jump rings: 72 turquoise, ¼", 16-gauge; 56 light pink, ¼", 16-gauge; 72 dark pink, ¼", 16-gauge
- Rubber rings: 72 yellow, ¼" (10mm), 16-gauge; 88 purple, ¼" (10mm), 16-gauge

Resources: linkitwithjumprings.com, The Ring Lord: theringlord.com for aluminum and rubber, and Fire Mountain Gems and Beads, firemountaingems.com

Photo of finished piece by Jim Lawson; all other photos courtesy of the author.

sylvie

Create a 9-ring chain, alternating metal and rubber. Begin with turquoise metal, blue rubber, dark pink 14-gauge metal, blue rubber, turquoise metal, yellow rubber, orange metal, yellow rubber, and orange metal. This completes row 1. Pick up a 14-gauge dark pink metal with two blue rubber rings to begin row 2.

1

Lace the dark pink metal ring through the bottom of the second rubber ring and through the top of the third and close.

2

After each addition, lay the piece flat. Arrange all the rings so they lie the same way.

3

Pick up a turquoise metal ring with a yellow rubber ring. Lace it through the bottom of the turquoise and yellow rubber ring (they are the third from the left and the turquoise lies under the yellow), and through the top of the last yellow rubber ring. Close.

4

Lace the last orange ring through the yellow rubber ring added in Step 4, and the yellow ring directly above it. Close.

5

Working from the center to the left, pick up a turquoise metal ring with a yellow rubber ring. Lace the turquoise ring through the bottom of the first turquoise rubber ring, and the top of the second two overlapping turquoise rings. Close.

6

sylvie

7 Complete row 2 by lacing a metal orange ring through the first overlapping rubber rings. Note that each row is made up of 5 metal and 4 rubber rings.

8 Begin row 3, and follow along with the colors as indicated in the photos.

9 Complete row 3 as shown.

10 Complete row 4 as shown.

11 Complete row 5 as shown.

12 Complete row 6 as shown.

sylvie

Complete row 7 as shown.

13

Row 8 completes the first unit. Begin again with row 1 and complete 3 more identical units.

14

We'll connect all four units to complete the bracelet. Open the metal rings from this side to attach to the second unit. Pick up and open the center turquoise ring, and hold it with the pliers in your right hand.

15

With your left hand, hold the other end of the second unit. You need the rubber rings standing up so you can lace into them.

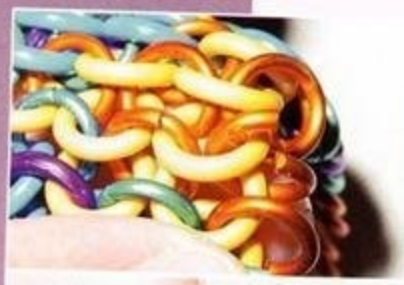
16

Lace the center turquoise ring underneath the two center (yellow) rubber rings from the end of the bracelet. Close.

17

To the right of the center ring is an orange ring. Open and lace through two yellow rubber rings. Close.

18



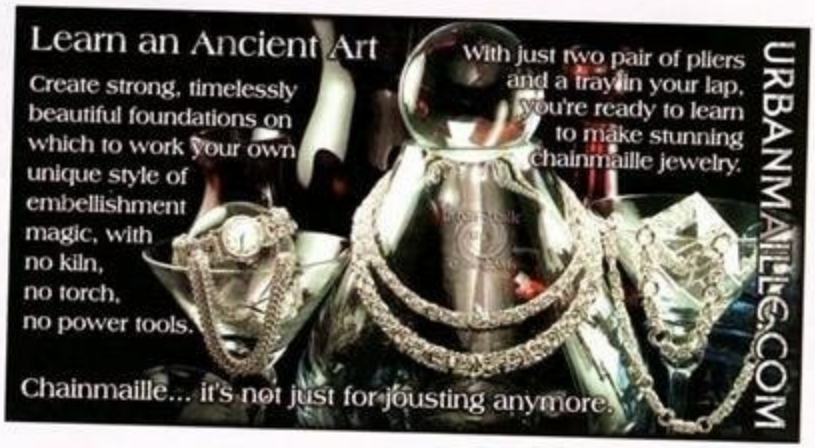
19 Lace the orange ring on the end through the yellow rubber ring. Close.

20 Working from the left of center, open and lace the 14-gauge metal pink ring through the two turquoise rubber rings. Close.

21 Lace the last and final turquoise metal ring through the turquoise rubber ring. Connect the next two units, and close up the bracelet. Your bracelet is complete. Notice that both sides look a little different. Turn it inside out, and decide which side you prefer.

Susan C. Thomas

has been a middle school art teacher for 20 years. She's been a serious beadwork artist for 10 years with a reputation for complex and flawless work. Susan has taught for the Indiana Bead Society, numerous libraries, Purdue University Galleries, bead stores, and other shows. When Susan introduced chain maille to her middle school art club, she experienced a large increase in participants. It became clear that the interest in using brightly-colored aluminum and rubber rings together should not be reserved for only kids.


Learn an Ancient Art
Create strong, timelessly beautiful foundations on which to work your own unique style of embellishment magic, with no kiln, no torch, no power tools.
With just two pair of pliers and a tray in your lap, you're ready to learn to make stunning chainmaille jewelry.
URBANMAILLE.COM
Chainmaille... it's not just for jousting anymore.

sylvie

buzzy bees scatter pins

Wire whimsy.

SKILL LEVEL ❂❂❂

BY DALE "COUGAR" ARMSTRONG

TOOLS & SUPPLIES

- Flat nose pliers
- Round nose pliers
- Chain nose pliers
- Wire angle cutters
- Pin vise
- Quilter's tape
- Ruler in mm and inches
- Extra fine point marker
- 22-gauge square half hard wire, 2'
- 6mm round bead
- 8mm round bead

Photo of finished piece by Jim Lawson; all other photos courtesy of the author.

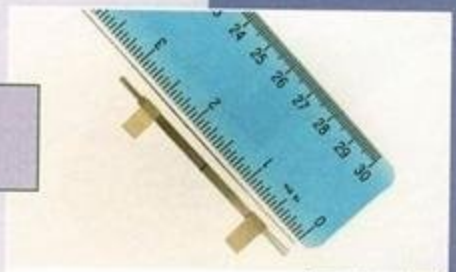
Scatter whimsical sparkle with these adorable bee pins. The bee has long been admired and revered as an example of being able to do the impossible. Follow these directions, and you can create your own beautiful little bees to give as inspirational gifts — wear one yourself as a reminder that YOU can do anything! Be creative by changing the colors and material of the beads used. Gemstone beads such as tiger-eye combined with gold wire make a more realistic creature, while faceted pastel crystals make one worthy of being in any fairy tale. You could even attach a small dangling flower to its nose.

Before you start, please be aware that, in my personal opinion, this is an *intermediate* design. As an intermediate wire jeweler, you should be able to follow the presented formula without individual details on how to execute the basic steps that lead to the required procedure.

sylvie

Straighten, clean, and cut 22-gauge square, half hard wire into the following lengths: Body = One 5½" piece; Legs = Two 2¼" pieces; Wings = Three 3" pieces; Wrap wire = One 1½" piece. Measure from one end of the body wire, and mark at 2". Center the wing wires between the legs wires, and tape near either end. Measure and mark the center of this new bundle.

1

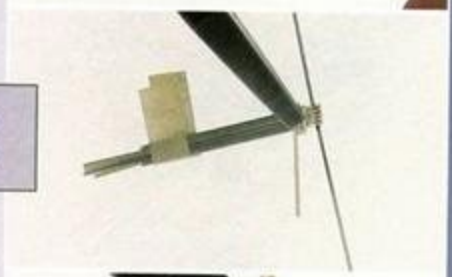


At the center mark of the wing/leg bundle, use flat nose pliers to make a squared U shape, over the jaw of the pliers.

2

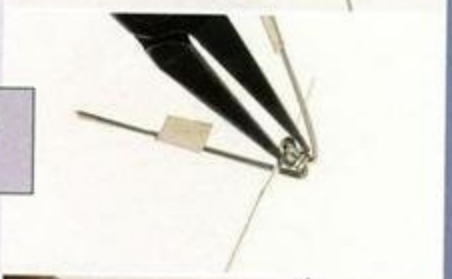
Use flat nose pliers to crimp the U bundle over the body wire on the longer side of the 2" mark. Make a deep hook at one end of the wrap wire. Use it to wrap the U shape over the body wire, three times to show, and trim. Snug the wraps as close to the body as possible.

3



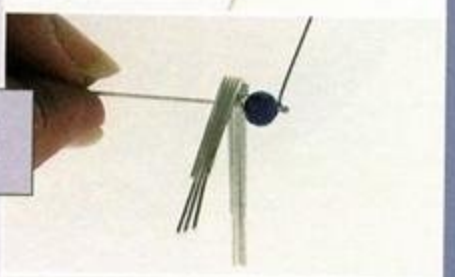
Hold the wrapped segment with flat nose pliers, and bend the wings/legs up over the body wire. Remove the tape.

4



On the short end of the body wire, thread on a 6mm round bead. Place chain nose pliers onto the body wire and hold it, immediately after the bead. Bend the body wire after the pliers' tips, down at a 90° angle. Fold this wire back onto itself, and then down again, forming a *nose.*

5



Trim this *nose* wire to ½" long, and use round nose pliers to make an eye to catch the pin.

6

sylvie

7 On the long end of the body wire, thread on an 8mm bead and bend the body wire down at a 90° angle, locking on the bead. Place round nose pliers, about midway up the jaw, onto the bent body wire, immediately under the bead, and bend the body wire around 1½ times, ending with the wire headed toward the front of the pin. This forms the pin's spring.

8 Use flat nose pliers to properly position the spring directly under the body. Clasp the wire into the formed eye, trim to desired length at a *very* sharp angle and use a file or stone to remove any burrs from the end, forming the *pin*.

9 Slightly separate the four leg wires from the wing wires. Use flat nose pliers to hold each leg wire near the body, and with your fingers, bend each leg into the position desired, making a knee. At the end of each leg, use chain nose pliers to roll up each end, forming a foot.

10 Gently fan the wing wires apart and use a pin vise to twist each one. Starting with the wing wire closest to the 6mm bead/head, trim them to the following lengths: 1", ⅞", and ¾", (the wire closest to the back/body). Rosette each wing wire toward the side of the body, starting with the shortest, and working back to the longest.

11 Use flat nose pliers to shape and position the wings.

Dale "Cougar" Armstrong

Dale "Cougar" Armstrong is a diehard rockhound, lapidary, and a full-time wire artist and instructor. She teaches at major jewelry events including Wire Jewelry Fest, Jewelry Arts Expo, and Bead Fest, as well as in her personal studio in Southeast Tennessee. Her award-winning work has appeared in many printed publications, and she is currently making instructional DVDs with Jewelry Television. To contact, please visit her Web site www.cougarscreations.com

sylvie

woven wire pendant

Suspend a stone in an intricate cage of wire.

SKILL LEVEL ⊙⊙⊙⊙⊙

BY JANE CHRISTIE

TOOLS & SUPPLIES

- Chain nose pliers
- Flush cutters
- Pin vise
- Fine-tipped permanent pen
- Masking tape or quilter's tape
- 22-gauge square, soft wire (round may also be used)

To determine amount needed, establish the circumference of the stone, and multiply this number by 3. Cut 3 pieces at this length. Ex: Stone circumference = 4" x 3 = 12"; Cut three 12" pieces

- 26-gauge round, soft wire

Will vary according to size of stone. For this particular piece, I used an 8½' length for the weaving, and the stone was 2" long.

- 22-gauge half round wire, approximately 8" (will make all 3 wraps)
- 2" long stone (fairly flat for wrapping, size can vary)

Photo of finished piece by Jim Lawson; all other photos courtesy of the author.

After more than 10 years of discovering all the versatilities of wire jewelry, I have discovered yet another way to add interest to my designs ... by adding weaving!

Much of my work is earthy and organic, and most definitely freeform. I am inspired by the movement and irregularity of rough and polished natural stones. These stones have voices of their own, and if you listen carefully to them, they will guide your wire to where it belongs! This project incorporates one such stone.

The method is adaptable to any shape or size. Be aware that this is a freeform pattern, so all material measurements will vary, as will the shape and size of each stone. Weaving requires handling long lengths of fine wire, but the wire can be worked with right off the spool. This avoids kinking, and lessens the worry of not having enough length for your piece.

You should already have some experience with binding (wraps), forming flat spirals, tucking and trimming wire ends, and using a pin vise. The weaving takes practice to perfect, but it's worth it!

sylvie

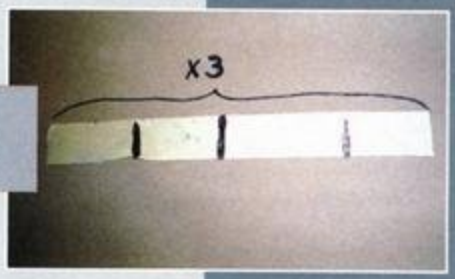
Decide where the top of your pendant will be. Wrap a piece of masking tape around outside of the stone, beginning at the top (center). Tape all the way around the perimeter of the stone, until the end of the piece of tape abuts to the starting point. Trim tape as necessary so the ends meet, but do not overlap. Quilter's tape works great. Mark the bottom (center) position on the tape with a fine-tipped permanent pen. Mark each side at the midpoint between the top and bottom spots, and they don't have to be completely symmetrical. These three positions will become the wrap locations on the 22-gauge wire that will hold the stone in place.

1

Gently remove the tape (now marked in 3 places) from the stone, and stick it down flat onto your work surface. You have just created a template for our wire. Measure the full length of the tape, and multiply it by 3. Cut three pieces of the 22-gauge wire at this length. These wires will be the ones that encase and hold the stone.

Example: My tape for this stone was 4". I multiplied by 3 to get 12". I need three pieces to encase my stone. Therefore, I needed 36" of 22-gauge wire for this piece, cut into three 12" lengths.

2



Place the wires side by side, and flat to each other with the ends even (bundle). Find the center measurement of the wire bundle, and place a mark across the three wires at this point. Place a piece of tape on both sides of this mark, leaving enough room to place a three or four turn wire wrap at the mark. With the bundle lying flat to the work surface, line the center mark of the bundle, to the center mark on the tape. Mark the bundle at the places that line up with the marks on the tape.

3

With the 22-gauge half round wire, place a wire wrap, three or four to show, at each mark on the bundle.

4

5 Line the center wrap of the bundle to the center bottom location of the stone. Gently form the wire around the stone as you did with the tape. It doesn't have to conform perfectly to the stone, just snugly.

6 Once the wire has been formed around the stone, wrap a piece of masking tape around the body to help hold the wire in place. Cross the ends of the bundle over until they meet and touch the top (center) of the stone. Mark the wires at this spot with a permanent, fine-tipped pen.

7 At the top mark on the wires, use pliers to bend each side up, so it is positioned straight up from the center of the stone. The wires are now parallel to each other and positioned straight up from the center of the stone. This will be the position of the pendant's bail.

8 Tape these parallel wires together, but leave some space between the top of the stone and the tape. You will need to work in this area.

9 Wrap the long 26-gauge wire tightly around the wires as close to the stone as possible for about three or four turns. Trim and tuck in the short, starting end, *but do not cut the long end. This is the weaving wire.*

10 Spread out the wires as shown.

sylvie

Remove the tape that is around the body. Sometimes your stone will fall out of the wire casing at this point. Don't panic, just hold it in place with your fingers for now.

You have to create a "cradle" to keep the stone in place. Look at the stone from the side. There are three wires all the way around the stone. Spread the outside wires away from the middle wire, and form them to encase the edges of the stone in the front and the back.

Work them gently over the edges of the stone at each section of wire between the wraps.

11

Shape and pull the wires aesthetically with your pliers to hold the stone.

12

We are now going to weave our bail. Using the long 26-gauge wire that is wrapped around all of the wires at the top of the stone, bring the wire up and over the horizontal wires, and wrap it snugly onto the two vertical (bail) wires. Try to get it down close to spot where all the wires are together. Begin to weave the 26-gauge wire over and under the two bail wires in a figure-8 pattern. You can change the width of the woven area by spreading the wires apart, so try to keep the bail wires fairly parallel while working, for the most even look. For my piece, I kept the wires about ¼" apart.

13

The figure-8 pattern is shown from the end view for clarity. Wrap a complete turn around each wire as you weave. This helps to anchor the weaving in place. Try to keep the tension even, and push the weaving back every so often, to re-compress it, as it tends to spread out along the wires as you weave. Be careful not to kink the wire as you work. Working the 26-gauge wire right off its spool seems to work well, and lessens the danger of having too short a length of wire for your design. This process gets easier with practice.

14

15 Continue weaving until you have reached a length of 2".

16 Using a small dowel, or a pen (a Sharpie is the perfect size) form the 2" of weaving over the pen toward the FRONT of the stone.

17 Pinch the woven bail tightly to top of the stone.

18 Anchor it in place by wrapping the 26-gauge wire several times, tightly, around the base of the bail as shown. Do not cut the wire!

19 From the front of the piece, we have a bail in the center, and a set of wires sticking out to the left and right of the bail. Bring the long 26-gauge wire to the set of wires on the left, and begin weaving, as you did with the bail. If you wish to have a wider weaving across the stone, spread the two thicker wires apart slightly for a bolder look.

20 Weave several inches, and gently fold the wires across the face of the stone in a position that is pleasing to you. This weaving section will be anchored to the side of the stone by attaching it to the "cage" we previously made around the stone. Once you have a shape you like, mark the spot where the weaving wires cross the center wire of the "cage" around the stone.

sylvie

Carefully bend the weaving section back to the left of the bail, where it originally was. You can now weave all the way up to the marks you just made. Repositioning makes it much easier to weave flat and gives us the space to do the next step.

21

You will notice that there are two of the heavier wires hanging down the front of the stone from the bail. Trim each one to about 2" long, and form them into flat spirals. Position them to cover the base of the bail. It's great way to hide all those wires, and looks pretty too!

22

With the weaving completed down to the marks and the two flat spirals in place, reposition the weave across the stone, as you did previously. Hold it in place with your thumb. Anchor the weave to the center wire of the cage, by "sewing" the 26-gauge wire firmly in place with several wraps.

Bend the two larger weaving wires over the middle "cage" wire. Trim these two wires, leaving enough length so you can tuck their ends around and under the cage wires.

23

Gently shape your weaving, with pliers or your fingers, into a pleasing shape.

24

Most designs are best in threes, so trim one of the remaining wires to the right of the bail, to about 2" long. Roll it into a flat spiral until it is positioned at the base of the bail.

25 Only one wire is left. If you used 22-gauge square wire when you started, you have the option to twist it for a little texture. Round wire will not show texture when twisted, so it can be left as is, if that is what you started with. Attach the square wire to a pin vise, and twist the wire.

26 Bring this wire around the back of the bail and out to the front of the pendant, and gently form the wire to follow the "flow" of the weaving.

27 Bend the end of the wire over the edge of the stone to the back. Trim, leaving enough of a tail to tuck up under the "cage" wires to hold the twisted wire in place.

29 Tuck the tail around and under the "cage" wires. Enjoy your piece, and try others by varying the shapes and sizes of the stones.

Jane Christie
is a full time jewelry designer and teacher from Ottawa, Canada. Jane will be traveling to rural Tanzania, Africa in 2007 to share her jewelry skills with women striving to start their own micro-business, with the help of Project Tembo www.projectembo.org. To see more of Jane's artwork go to: www.twistedsistercreations.com

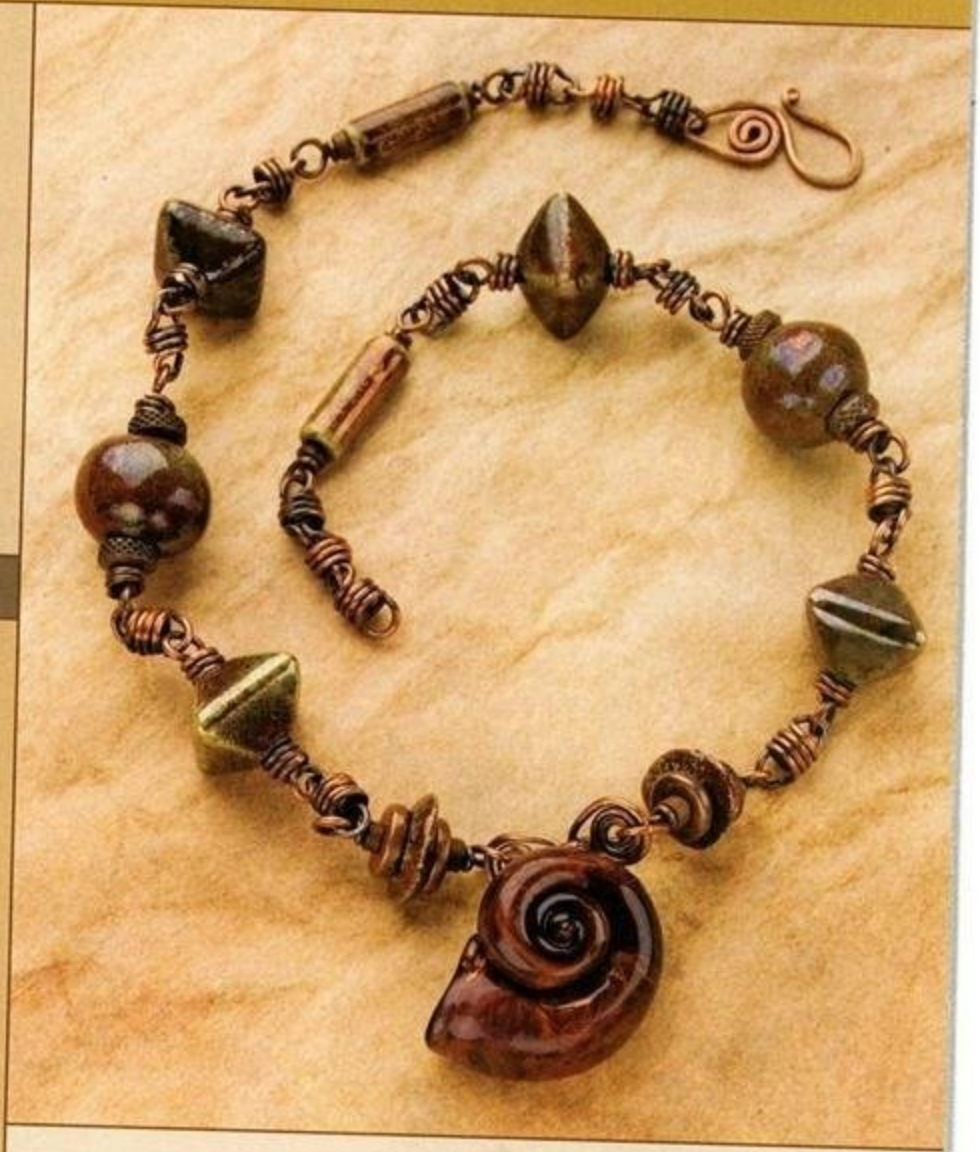
sylvie

copper links necklace

Handmade chain pairs with ceramic raku beads.

SKILL LEVEL

BY KIM OTTERBEIN



TOOLS & SUPPLIES

- Lampwork shell
- 4 ceramic bicone beads
- 2 ceramic round beads
- 2 ceramic disks
- Ceramic tube beads or ovals
- 4 copper disks
- 5 copper spacers
- ⅛" dowel
- 24-gauge dead soft sterling or copper wire, 18"
- 18-gauge dead soft copper wire, 10'–12'
- Chain nose pliers
- Round nose pliers
- Wire cutters
- Hammer
- Bench block
- Liver-of-sulfur (optional)

All supplies available from The Bead House, www.thebeadhouse.com

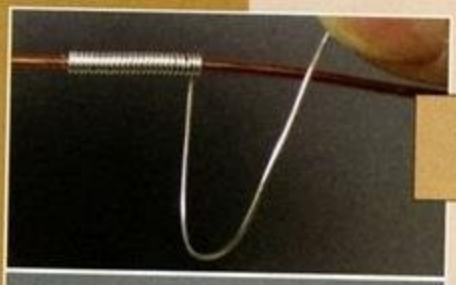
Photo of finished piece by Jim Lawson; all other photos courtesy of the author.

The original idea for this necklace came from the raku ceramic beads with a copper color. When I saw the shell, it seemed like a natural fit. I like the little bit of silver in the center — it makes it easier to make matching earrings.

This project assumes some familiarity with wire wrapped loops and making a clasp.

sylvie

copper links necklace



1 Cut 6" of 18-gauge copper wire. Holding the 24-gau wire and 18-gauge copper wire together, wrap the 2 gauge wire around the copper wire.

2 Center the silver coil of wire on the 6" copper piece, p the bead on, and gently bend the wire at the center.

3 Place a large copper spacer bead over the two ends. Cross the wires, and spiral each end of the copper wires right up to the spacer bead with chain nose pli- ers. Leave enough room in the center of the spirals to put rings through. Hammer the spirals.

4 I learned this little link from Connie Fox, and I really enjoy incorporating it into my projects. Using about 30" of 18-gauge of copper wire, wrap the wire around the ⅛" dowel.

5 Slide the coiled wire off the dowel, and hold the top end of the wire facing you. Count four full coils down, and using round nose pliers, separate the coils between the fourth and fifth coils.

6 Cut the wire on the opposite side of the coil, making sure it's even with the first cut. Bend each end up with chain nose pliers even with make a loop on each end. Counting the rings and cutting on opposite sides gives you three full rings in between the bent up ends. Make as many links as you need to get the length you desire. This necklace uses 14 of these links, using about 4' of wire total.

sylvie

Using 18-gauge wire, wire wrap your ceramic beads, discs, and spacers. Some of the ceramic beads have very large holes and need to have a double wrap. Make a loop like a normal wrap, but keep the end you're wrapping with longer. Wrap down to the bead, and wrap back up to the loop, on top of the other wraps. If the ceramic beads are wobbly on the wire, fill the space with size 6 seed beads.

To make the clasp, cut 4½" of 18-gauge copper wire. Using round nose pliers, make a spiral about three times around. Bring the wire out straight and hold on with the chain nose pliers, making a bend, and bringing the wire back to the spiral. Hammer the free end into a paddle shape, and curl it back on itself with the round nose pliers. Bend the hook shape, and hammer the whole clasp.

Connect all the links using chain nose pliers. Open the links by bending the ends to the side, and close over the wrapped beads. A link is in between each wrapped bead, and there are four at the end of the necklace.

Copper patinas quickly, but if you prefer immediate results, use liver-of-sulfur. Use a paintbrush on the bright shiny wire, so the copper beads that already have a patina don't get any darker. You can liver-of-sulfur your wire ahead of time if you don't mind getting your hands dirty.

Kim Otterbein
has been designing jewelry for the past 15 years and owns a bead store, The Bead House, in Bristol, R.I., where she teaches classes.

industrial inspired necklace

Silver wire turns ordinary washers into sparkling sunbursts.

SKILL LEVEL

BY JI SUN DENA YANG

TOOLS & SUPPLIES

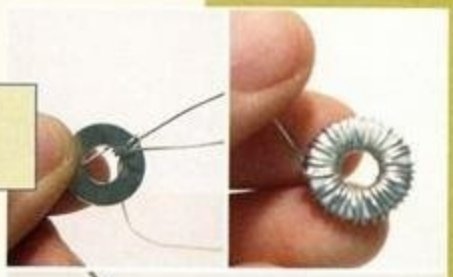
- ¼" flat washers, 9
- 3/16" flat washers, 6
- Spool of 24-gauge tarnish-resistant silver tone wire
- Spool of 28-gauge tarnish-resistant silver tone wire
- Approximately 12" of 20-gauge tarnish-resistant silver tone wire
- 1 large silver tone lobster claw clasp
- 6mm beads of your choice, 2
- 3" medium oval silver tone chain
- 2 medium silver tone coil caps
- Concave round nose step pliers
- Chain nose pliers
- Flat nose pliers
- Flush cutter
- Craft glue

Photo of finished piece by Jim Lawson; all other photos courtesy of the author.

This design came about when I was playing around with washers and silver tone wire. I didn't have anything in mind when I began toying with them. The piece came to life on its own! I hope you enjoy making this piece.

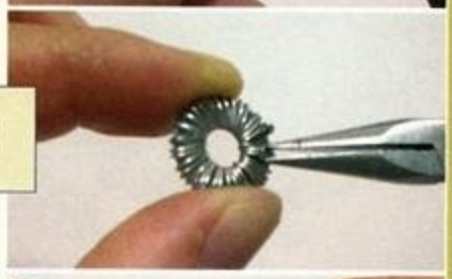
sylvie

For each ¼" washer, cut approximately 24" of the 24-gauge wire. For each 3/16" washer, cut approximately 18" of the 24-gauge wire. Wrap the wire around the washers until covered.

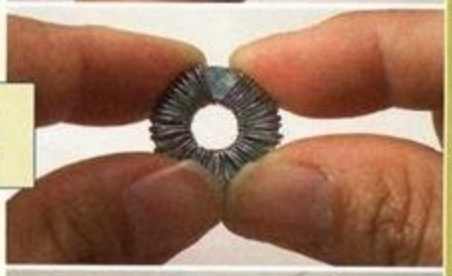


Once the washer is wrapped, take the tail end of the wire, and feed it under 2–3 strands of the existing wire. Fold back around the same set of wire approximately 3–5 times.

Cut the excess wire with your flush cutter. Use your chain nose pliers to ensure the cut end is secure and lying flat, and the sharp edge is not poking out.



Using your fingers, push the wires so they are neatly lying against each other, creating a small blank space on the washer.



Take two ¼" washers and place them flush against each other, ensuring the blank parts of the washers are touching. Cut approximately 24" of 28-gauge silver tone wire and begin wrapping the washers together.

Wrap approximately 7–13 times, keeping the wire tight throughout the entire process. You will want to keep the longer part of the wire to one side when wrapping. You will use this 24" piece of wire to hold three washers together.

sylvie

7

Add the third washer to the design, and connect it by wrapping the wire from the right upper washer. Wrap the wire approximately 5–7 times. Remember to keep the wire tight. Connect the third washer to the upper left washer.

8

Once all three washers are connected, take the tail of the wire and feed it under the connecting portion of the wire. Finish it as in Step 3.

9

Treat the upper right washer as the starting point for the second set of washers to be added. Continue this process until all of the ¼" washers are connected. Cut approximately 18" of 28-gauge wire and connect the 3/16" washer to the ¼" washer. Continue this step until all of the 3/16" washers are connected.

10

Cut two 12" lengths of black leather cord.

11

Feed the leather cords halfway through the upper left and right washers.

12

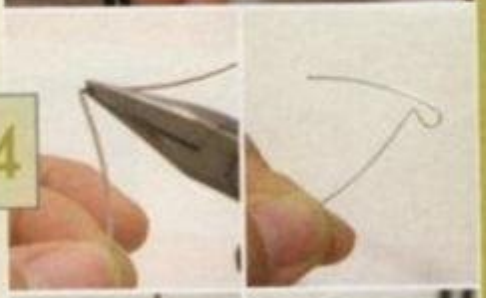
Cut approximately 10" of 24-gauge wire, and wrap the leather approximately nine times. Feed the tail end of the wire through the wrapped wire, and cut the excess.

Take the ends of the leather, and feed it into the leather caps. It's easier to feed the leather by twisting the caps onto the leather ends. Add a drop of craft glue to secure.

13

Cut approximately 4" of 20-gauge wire and using the chain nose pliers, create a 90° angle. Using the concave pliers (or round nose pliers), create a bend in the wire.

14



Feed the wire through the end cap loop and make a wrapped loop. Use chain nose pliers to ensure the cut wire is secure and flat.

15

Add a bead of your choice, and create a 90° bend in the wire. Using the concave pliers, create a second bend.

16

Add the lobster claw clasp, and enclose. Cut the excess wire, and using the chain nose pliers, ensure the cut wire is securely tucked in.

17

Use approximately 2" of large oval silver plated chain. Using your chain nose and flat nose pliers, open one of the links, and loop it through the connector. Open and close the link as you would a jump ring. Don't pull the link apart.

18

sylvie

19 Add a bead dangle to the end of the chain.

Ji Sun Dena Yang
has always used her hands to create things in crocheting, needlepoint, painting, drawing, or beadwork. Her imagination has been on fire ever since she picked up her first beading book 10 years ago. She recently received the "Creative Design in Jewelry" award at the Larson Art Gallery in Yakima, Wash. She can be contacted at blissbeaddesigns@gmail.com.

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1

2

3

4

5

To have your original designs considered for WireWorks, please send your images to dpeck@interweave.com

sylvie

three rings

Individually appealing and altogether striking.

BY MARIE CARTER

As I was thinking about the design for the Untamed Heart Ring, I wanted to be sure to create something that felt like I was wearing nothing, but made a bold statement. This ring is close to the finger. It has no stones, but attracts a lot of attention because a heart is something that everyone can understand and relate to emotionally.

When I designed the Flowers Ring, I was admiring an engagement ring that I had seen. It was a spiral of diamonds. It was unusual to me, and I wanted to recreate something very pretty and obviously special. This ring sits atop the finger more and seems to be happy.

In creating the Estate Appeal ring, I had the three stone ring idea in my mind but I wanted a vertical designed ring that had an almost vintage appeal. I don't usually make rings this way and was delighted with how it turned out. The estate ring looks wonderful with all of the same stone, or different stones, as I used here.

Photo of finished pieces by Jim Lawson; all other photos courtesy of the author.

sylvie

estate appeal ring

TOOLS & SUPPLIES

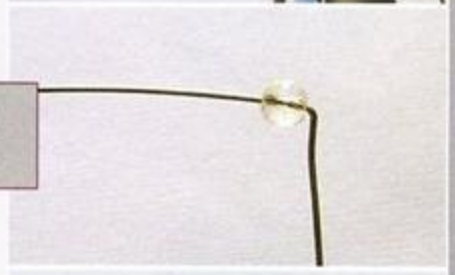
SKILL LEVEL

- 18-gauge round dead soft wire, 12" (Use 16-gauge for a bolder look)
- 22-gauge round dead soft wire, 12"
- 6mm round bead (hole must accommodate 18-gauge round wire)
- 4mm round beads, 2 (holes must accommodate 22-gauge round wire)
- Plastic covered pliers
- Flush cutters
- Chain nose pliers
- Bent nose pliers
- Flat nose pliers
- Ring mandrel
- Plastic mallet
- Half round file
- Tumbler, stainless steel shot, plastic pellets, detergent (optional)

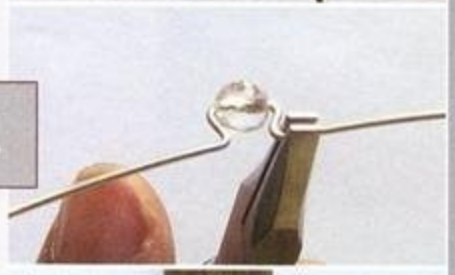
1 Cut a 12" length of the 18-gauge round wire. Pull the wire straight with plastic covered pliers.

2 Make a 90° bend about halfway down the wire, using flat nose pliers.

3 Thread the 6mm bead onto the wire and slide it up to the bend.



4 Make a 90° bend on the other side of the bead. Angle each bend slightly toward the bead, this "locks" the bead in place. Extend the remaining wire straight out from each side.



5 Holding the bead and wire against the mandrel, form the shank by wrapping each extended wire once around the back of the mandrel, creating a double wire shank.

6

Take one of the ends of the wire, come up and wrap once around the circumference the bead. Take the other end of the wire and do the same, coming up from under. Angle each wire upward after wrapping around the bead once. Slip the ring off of the mandrel.

7

Using 22-gauge wire, make five wraps on the top extended wire.

8

Slide on a 4mm bead, and wrap 5 times. Snip the wire. Also snip the wire at the beginning of the wrap, and push the coil with the bead to the top of the 6mm bead.

9

Press and file any rough edge on the snipped wire. Repeat Steps 7–9 on the other extended wire.

10

Slip the ring on the mandrel to check the orientation of the beads, and adjust as necessary. You may want to push one of the coils a little further in, or you may want to snip one wrap from each side. Take each extended wire and wrap once around the base of the setting.

11

Finish the ring by wrapping the extended wires three times around the shank, next to the center of the ring. Snip on the inside of the ring on the third wrap, and file.

Slip the ring onto the mandrel and hammer the shank lightly with the plastic mallet. Tumble for 20 minutes.

sylvie

flower ring

TOOLS & SUPPLIES

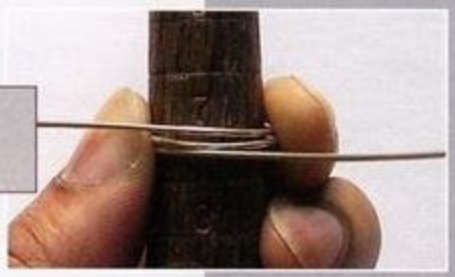
SKILL LEVEL

- 18-gauge round dead soft wire, 12" (Use 16-gauge wire for a bolder look)
- 24-gauge round dead soft wire, 12"
- 3mm–4mm faceted beads, 5–7 (rounds or rondelles, holes must be able to accommodate 24-gauge round wire)
- Ring mandrel
- Bent chain nose pliers
- Flush cutters
- Plastic mallet
- Half round file
- Tumbler, stainless steel shot, plastic pellets, detergent (optional)

Cut a 12" length of the 18-gauge round wire. Place the wire on the mandrel at one size larger than your desired ring size.

Pressing the wire against mandrel with your non-dominant hand, use your index finger and thumb of your dominant hand to begin to form a shank.

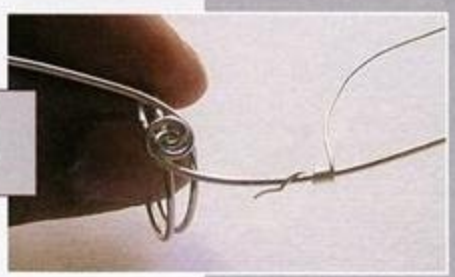
Using your dominant hand, continue to wrap the wire around the mandrel until a double wire shank is created. Bring the ends of the wire to the front of the shank so that they are both on top of the mandrel. Make sure that wires did not overlap.



Begin to form a spiral at the center of the ring, rotating both wires in a counter-clockwise direction while pressing the forming spiral with the thumb of your non-dominant hand.

Stop at the second "pass," so that you have two interlocked loops. Remove the ring from the mandrel.

Using the top extended wire as a mandrel, take 24-gauge wire and make five wraps.



5 Slip on 1 bead, then wrap three times.

6 Repeat with two more beads, with three wraps in between each one. Snip the excess wire at the start of the wrap, and push the coil toward the spiral as far as it will go. Repeat Steps 4–6 on the other extended wire.

7 Slip the ring back onto the mandrel and begin to create a circle of beads. You will be able to determine whether or not one of the wires needs another bead. If necessary, wrap one or more beads onto the wire so that no spaces in the circle of beads exist. When you are comfortable with the look of your circle of beads, slip the ring off of the mandrel, and snip the excess 24-gauge wrap wire.

8 Place the ring back on the mandrel, and wrap the extended wires once or twice around the base of the setting.

9 Finish the ring by wrapping each extended wire three times around the shank next to the center of the ring.

10 Snip on the inside of the ring on third wrap, and file until smooth.

Slip the ring onto the mandrel and hammer the shank lightly with the plastic mallet. Tumble for 20 minutes.

sylvie

untamed heart ring

TOOLS & SUPPLIES

SKILL LEVEL

- 16-gauge round dead soft wire, 12"
- Ball peen hammer
- Round nose pliers
- Extra long round nose pliers
- Flat nose pliers
- Ultra flush cutters
- Ring mandrel
- Barrette file
- Tumbler, stainless steel shot, plastic pellets (optional)

Cut a 12" length of the 16-gauge round wire. Using a ball peen hammer, tap one end of the wire three times, flattening it slightly.

About ½" down from the top of the round nose pliers, form a 1½ loop spiral.

Hold the newly formed spiral in your index finger and thumb of your non-dominant hand. Using extra long round nose pliers in your dominant hand, begin to form a loose heart shape. Anchor the pliers about ⅓–½" up from the loop.

Release the loop with your non-dominant hand, and press the wire over the pliers forming the first "bump" of the heart until the extended wire is pointing down. Take the round nose pliers onto the extended wire halfway between the "bump" and the formed loop. Use your non-dominant hand to press against the pliers, bring the wire back up and create the center of the heart. Tweak the shape as desired.

To complete the heart shape, place extra long round nose pliers just above the last bend you created to make the second "bump" just as you did the first, pressing the wire over the pliers. You should have a recognizable heart shape at this point. Be sure that you are satisfied with the shape of your heart. Tweak as necessary, and picture how the heart will suit the finger.

sylvie

6 Pass the extended wire through the hole of the spiral you created in Step 2.

7 Place the closed heart on the ring mandrel at a half size larger than your final ring size. Pull and press the extended wire against the mandrel at the appropriate size, creating the shank.

8 While still holding the ring against the mandrel, use your non-dominant hand to bring the extended wire over the middle loop of the heart.

9 Put the mandrel down and continue to hold the ring with your non-dominant hand. Place the extended wire in the middle loop, and using chain nose pliers, pull the wire through the loop. Put the ring back on the mandrel to confirm that it is the right size, still a bit larger than final desired size. Adjust it if necessary by pulling more of the extended wire through the loop to make the ring smaller or pushing more of the extended wire back, making the ring larger. Lock the ring by wrapping the extended wire around the shank next to top of the heart 2–3 times.

10 Snip the excess wire with flush cutters, and file the edge until smooth. Place the ring on the mandrel and tap lightly with a plastic mallet. If you like, you can lightly hammer the heart on a steel mandrel for slightly flattened bumps. Tumble for 20 minutes.

Marie Carter
finds inspiration everywhere, including iron gates on many windows on Park Avenue, and twists and turns of various headboards and chair backs. Her part-time business is e-mail based. She can be reached at marielcarter @verizon.net.

sylvie

pattern wire earrings

Pattern wire creates instant interest.

SKILL LEVEL

BY DONNA ZIMMER

TOOLS & SUPPLIES

- Flush cutters
- Heavy flush cutters
- Round nose pliers
- Flat nose pliers
- Pin vise or wire twisters
- File
- Ruler
- Quilters tape
- Fine point marker
- 1½"–2" Pattern wire
- 21-gauge square half hard wire
- 21-gauge half round wire

Photo of finished piece by Jim Lawson; all other photos courtesy of Charles Zimmer.

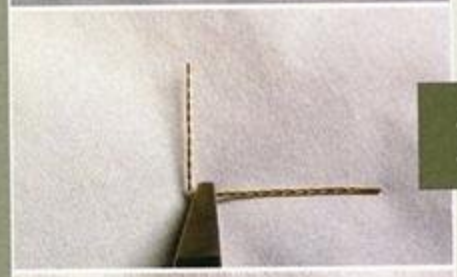
Casual and classy, you can use pattern wire scraps to create these easy-to-make earrings. When made in a combination of gold and silver tones, they are a great addition to any jewelry collection, because they go with everything.

Casual and classy, you can use pattern wire scraps to create these easy-to-make earrings.

sylvie

pattern wire earrings

1 For each earring, cut a ¾" piece of pattern wire and file off any burrs. Straighten, clean, and cut one 3" piece and one 2" piece of 21-gauge square wire. Use your pin vise to twist each piece of 21-gauge square wire.



2 Measure down ¾" on the 2" piece, and mark. With your flat nose pliers, bend at the mark to form an L shape.

3 Measure up from this bend 5/16" (or the width of the pattern wire you're using), and mark. Bend up to form a U shape, forming a frame.

4 Measure and mark the center of the 3" wire. Holding your wire on the mark with your round nose pliers, wrap around your pliers, crossing the wire over itself to form the eye that will later be used to connect your ear wires.

5 If you are using 5/16" wide pattern wire, measure 3/16" from the cross over, mark, and bend down using your flat nose pliers to form the side of the earring. Repeat for the other side. This measurement can be adjusted, according to the width of the pattern wire you are using.

6 Place the pattern wire inside of the U shaped piece and tape to hold in place. Trim off any wire that extends past the pattern wire. Remove the tape and position the outside frame around the other wires, and re-tape in the middle.

sylvie

Cut an 8" piece of 21-gauge half round wire. Make an offset V with your flat nose pliers to start your wraps.

7

Make 4 wraps to show on the front, at the top and bottom of your piece, making sure that the ends of the wire are on the back of your piece. Remove all tape.

8

Bend the wires, at the bottom of the earring, toward the back. Cut them just past the top of the wraps. With your flat nose pliers, just catch the tip of these wires, and press down. Attach your ear wires and enjoy!

9

Donna Zimmer

At age 38, open-heart surgery was a wake-up call for Donna, telling her to slow down and enjoy life. Working in her flower garden and filling orders for her beautifully crocheted items kept her busy for years, until she discovered wire! Donna is now making wire jewelry creation her full-time career. She learned her techniques and design from Dale Armstrong, her teacher and mentor. She can be contacted via e-mail at czimmer@united.net.

sylvie

fanciful hoop earrings

Hoop earrings are always in style, and they go with just about anything.

Add wired beads to simple hoops.

SKILL LEVEL ◎

BY STEPHANIE RIGER

Hoop earrings are always in style, and they go with just about anything. I wear these with everything from blue jeans to a business suit. Adding cube beads gives them a contemporary silhouette. Thai fine silver cornerless cube beads make an especially elegant earring, but any cube bead will do. I've made these earrings oval-shaped, but you can make yours round, square, or in any other shape you want.

TOOLS & SUPPLIES

- 18 cube beads
- 20-gauge half hard sterling or copper wire, two 4.75" pieces
- 28-gauge soft sterling or copper wire
- Round nose pliers
- Chain nose pliers
- Mandrel (wooden dowel or nail polish or correction fluid bottle)
- Plastic nose pliers
- Permanent marker
- Cup burr (optional)
- Sanding tool

Photo of finished piece by Jim Lawson; all other photos courtesy of the author.

sylvie

Cut two 4.75" lengths of 20-gauge sterling or copper wire. Make sure both ends are flush cut. Pull your wire through the jaws of plastic nose pliers to straighten if necessary.

1

Mark your round nose pliers ⅛" from the tip with a permanent marker. Place one end of the wire between the jaws of the pliers at this point, and rotate your wrist away from you, making a loop at the end of the wire. Place the tip of your chain nose pliers inside the loop at its bottom, and rotate your wrist toward you to center the loop.

2

Wind the wire around a mandrel to get the shape you desire. You may need to shape it with your fingers.

3

Hammer the bottom ⅔ of the oval. This will flatten the hoop slightly and harden it.

4

Place your oval on a piece of paper. Mark the paper at the places where you want to put the cubes. My marks are about ¼" apart. You will use these as markers for placing your cubes.

5

Place about ½" of the end of the 28-gauge wire under the hoop. Begin wrapping it around the hoop, going up toward the top of the hoop. As you coil, press it tightly against the hoop. If the coils separate, use your round nose pliers to squeeze them back together. When you get near the end of the ½" of wire, you will find it hard to bend. Cut off the end, and press the wire against the hoop.

6

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7

Once you have finished with the ½" of 28-gauge wire, coil the remaining wire down in the other direction, until you reach the first marker.

8

Add cubes at the designated points as you coil. Make sure to place the cubes on the outside edge of the oval, and hold them in place as you coil the wire through them and around the hoop. The hole in the cube should be parallel to the edge of the hoop.

9

Continue until you have completed coiling all the way around the oval, placing the same number of coils between each cube. (I placed 5 coils between each cube.) Cut off the excess wire, and push the end of the last coil against the hoop so that it does not protrude.

10

Make a small bend for a hook at this end of the earring. Sand the end of the wire, or use a cup burr to smooth the end of the hoop wire.

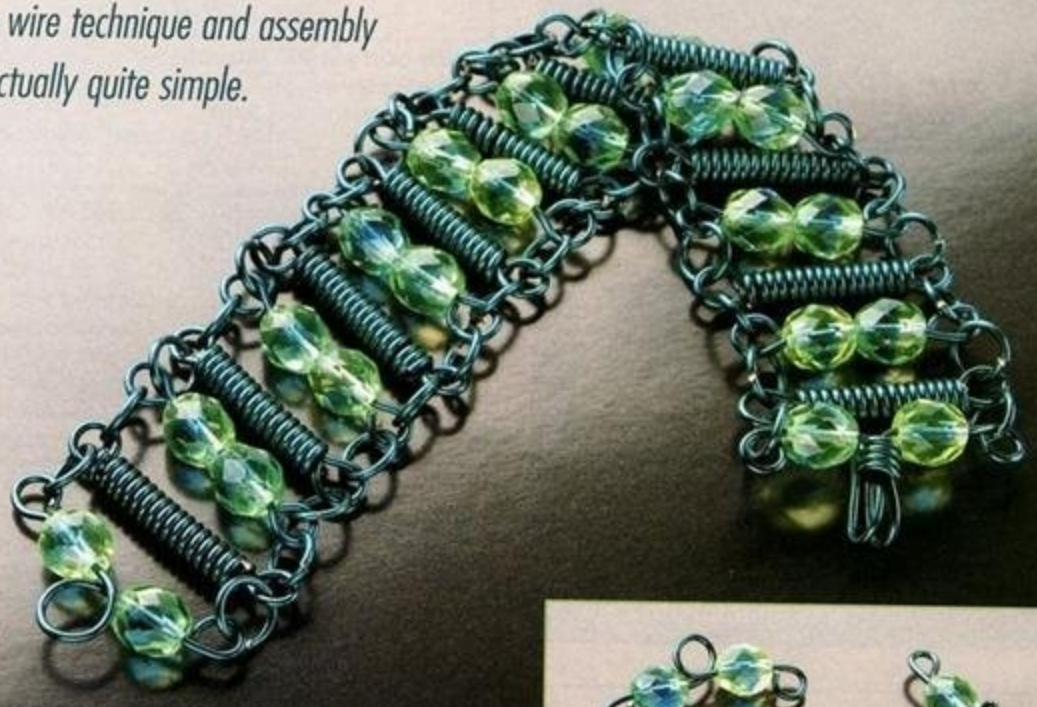
Stephanie Riger

knitted her way through classes in college and macraméd through graduate school. She began jewelry making about 8 years ago and quickly became addicted to bead and wire crochet, which she teaches in the San Francisco Bay area. Her wire wrapped mermaid pin won the Creative Wire Jewelry Forum Design Challenge in March 2005. See more of her work on her Web site, www.stephanieriger.com.

sylvie

caged envy

The wire technique and assembly is actually quite simple.



Glowing beads on vivid coils.

SKILL LEVEL ๑๑

BY SYNDEE HOLT

These beads just glow in their green glory. I wanted to create a simple, but structured wire background for them, and the aqua wire seemed to set off the darker heart of the bead.

The wire technique and assembly is actually quite simple.

TOOLS & SUPPLIES

- Emerald 8mm faceted beads from Bead Heaven, 2 packages
- 18-gauge aqua wire from Artistic Wire, approximately 5 yards
- Artistic Wire Wire Worker set
- 2 pairs round nose pliers
- Flat nose pliers
- Flush cutters

Beads are available at Michaels, wire and kit are available from Clay Factory Inc. clayfactoryinc.com

Photo of finished piece by Jim Lawson; all other photos courtesy of the author.

sylvie

Cut a length of wire that is 1¾" long. Using approximately 15mm of wire on one end, make a loop. Thread two of the beads onto the wire, and bend the wire at 90° to the top bead.

1

Grasp the other end of the wire in the same place in your pliers as before, and roll the end of the wire toward you to create the top loop. Repeat Step 1 to create 7–10 beaded segments, depending on your wrist size. Nine segments plus the two claps sections create an 8" bracelet.

2

Wrap the wire directly from the spool around the smallest of the metal mandrels in the Wire Worker set. Do this by hand, leaving about a 1" leader at the top of the wire. Wrap until you have a tight, even coil that is the same length as one of your bead segments. Trim the ends. Repeat nine more times for a total of 10 coils.

3

Repeat Steps 1–2, but thread the coil onto the wire instead of the beads.

4

To make matching jump rings, wrap the spooled wire around the next largest mandrel, keeping some space between the loops. Use your cutters to snip apart the coils.

5

Use two sets of pliers to "wiggle" the ends of the jump ring side to side to help harden it. Do NOT pull the ring ends apart. You can lightly tap them with a rubber mallet if you wish. Repeat Steps 5 and 6 as you work to create enough jump rings to assemble the bracelet.

Assemble the bracelet by alternating the coils and bead segments and connecting them with the jump rings.

6

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7 To create the hook and loop closures, cut off a 5" length of wire, and fold it in half tightly. Use your flat nose pliers to flatten the fold and neaten the wire. Use your round nose pliers to curve up the tip, and create a curve about ½" from the tip of the wire.

8 Bend the ends of the wire at 90° angles right under the tip of the upper loop. Thread a bead on each side. Trim the end of the wire to 15mm and use your pliers (in the same place on your pliers as before) to create a loop on each side. Finally, create a small coil of wire, slide it over the tip of the loop, and spread the loop slightly to hold it in place.

9 Cut another 5" length of wire, and create a loop in the center with the largest part of your round nose pliers.

10 Thread a bead onto each side of the loop. Trim the wire ends to 15mm and create the loop at each end as before. Attach the hook and loop assemblies to the bracelet with jump rings as you did the other pieces.

Syndee Holt
is an independent designer for Polyform Products (the Sculpey people), Jacquard Products, and Savage Paper Products, creating exclusive designs for kits, Web projects, brochures, and more. She is a founding member and former President of the infamous San Diego Polymer Clay Guild. Syndee writes for many national and international arts and crafts magazines, and appears regularly on television home shows such as *Home Matters* on the Discovery Channel, *Carol Duval* and *Our Place* on HGTV.

sylvie

MEDIA REVIEW

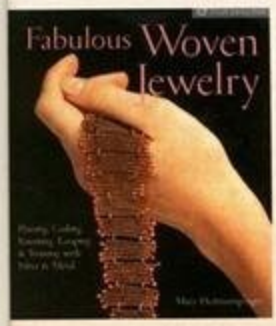
Fabulous Woven Jewelry

BY MARY HETTMANSPERGER

REVIEW BY ERIN GONZALEZ-HICKS

Lark Books 2006, soft cover, 160 pages, $17.95, ISBN # 1-59668-014-8

The transformation of large scale baskets and vessels into wearable jewelry is beautifully presented in Mary Hettmansperger's new book.



"Fabulous Woven Jewelry" includes a comprehensive overview section covering traditional organic weaving materials, such as raffia, reeds, pine needles, and various tree barks. Also covered are the more traditional supplies: wire, copper sheet, and the necessary findings for project completion. The photos will undoubtedly spark your imagination to forage for unusual found objects.

The five main chapters provide a well-rounded approach to learning the key techniques of plaiting, twining, looping, knotting, and coiling. Each technique starts off with easy-to-follow diagrams and step-by-step explanations, and follows through with 3–4 projects incorporating the design methods of the featured technique, and covering the possibilities using the full range of materials in the introduction.

This book is packed with 24 projects, and is ideal for those who love nature-inspired organic forms.

Many of the projects pieces are reminiscent of large-scale Native American baskets that have been shrunk down to wearable proportions. One of the best ways to approach the range of projects is to decide what materials you best enjoying working with, and try each of the techniques using your favorite supplies. The feel of twining or looping with 18-gauge wire is assuredly different from using waxen linen.

Looping is a fantastic technique to employ when you want to incorporate shells, a favorite stone, or a colorful piece of beach glass. The author also provides often neglected details on how to decrease the looping circumference and end your pieces.

Hettmansperger concludes with an inspirational gallery section at the end of the book with works from other artists that have incorporated the techniques, and showcase the range of possibilities. This book is a sort of Baskets 101 primer, and is ideal for those of you who want to explore basket-making techniques with projects that are smaller in scale, more manageable, and less time-intensive.

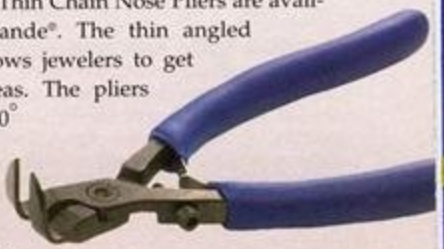
PRODUCT NEWS

Wire Drawplate

The Soft Flex Company offers the Wire Drawplate, designed to round, smooth, and condense Artistic Wire knitted chain without marring or scratching the wire. The drawplate is made of oak and measures 5¾" L x 2¼" W x ⅜" D. The holes graduate from 1mm to 8mm. Call (707) 938-3539 or visit www.softflexcompany.com.

Angled Thin Chain Nose Pliers

Swanstrom Angled Thin Chain Nose Pliers are available through Rio Grande®. The thin angled shape of the jaws allows jewelers to get into hard-to-reach areas. The pliers may be used to make 90° bends in thin gauge wire, tighten loop coils, and tuck and flatten wire ends for finishing. Call (800) 545-6566 or visit www.riogrande.com.



Beadalon® Watch Faces

Beadalon® introduces six stylish watch faces perfect for use with chain maille. The watch faces have triple loops on each side to easily adapt to one-, two-, or three-strand designs. Watch faces are available in silver or gold finish in six different styles: round, rectangle, oval, square, fancy rectangle, and round/square. Call (866) 423-2325 or visit www.beadalon.com.

Wire products for this issue was compiled by Kristen Gibson. Send information about new products to Sara Graham, Assistant Editor, via e-mail at sgraham@interweave.com or by snail mail to Sara Graham, *Step by Step Wire Jewelry*, 300 Chesterfield Parkway, Suite 100, Malvern, PA 19355.

sylvie